

VZCZCXRO1939  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #1191 1901433  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 081433Z JUL 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2040  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001191

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR  
GOLDBERGER/SHAMPAINE/SACHAR; NSC FOR PASCUAL; TREASURY FOR  
DAVIS/ROSE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2018  
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#)  
SUBJECT: BETHLEHEM STONE EXPORTS RESUME THROUGH CHECKPOINT  
NEAR CITY

REF: JERUSALEM 1051

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (U) Stone and marble industry representatives in Bethlehem say that Israeli officials have rescinded an order to reroute trucks carrying containers of stone and marble 40 kilometers to the south. The order had threatened to erode the competitiveness of Palestinian stone and marble, the West Bank's leading export commodity (reftel).

12. (C) According to Samir Dahdal, an executive at Nassar Stone Group (the West Bank's largest stone exporter), container trucks from Bethlehem began moving again through the checkpoint near the city on June 26. Dahdal said Nassar Nassar, the company's CEO, appealed personally to Major General Yosef Mishlev, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), to allow shipments to resume, though he could not say if that intervention had prompted the reversal. Ihab Khalil, Executive Manager of the Union of Stone and Marble in Palestine, said his organization had also met with COGAT officials to appeal the order. Khalil said that COGAT indicated they might go beyond restoration of the status quo by opening the checkpoint on Fridays and Saturdays.  
WALLES